

IWW Health Worker



Agenda for Change Special Issue

What a Waste of Time!

Talks on NHS pay have ended. In this special issue of *IWW Health Worker* we explain why NHS workers must vote no to the deal.

Three and a half years negotiating and what will health workers get out of Agenda for Change? A pathetic 3.225% next year!

Beverly Malone, General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, in the understatement of the year said the deal was "very disappointing".

She has a cheek! What have the RCN, Unison and the rest been up to? Talks have been going on since 1999. This is their deal.

RCN evidence to the Review Body claimed a 15% increase for nurses next year. What on earth are they doing agreeing 3.225% instead!

"Nurses will be furious" Gary a Grade D nurse told *IWW Healthworker* "we have been patiently waiting for Agenda for Change for years."

"We have been taking on extra work and now we are being told its only just over 3% next year".

Worse still the full new pay scales won't come in until October 2004!

"The consultants turned down a 30% deal in November. They told the BMA to go back and negotiate a better deal. Nurses must do the same. It is vital that a no vote to the deal is organised" Gary said.

Low Pay

It is not just nurses who are pissed off. Low paid staff will get just £5.18 an hour under the deal – but not until 2004! "Scotland has shown the way", a porter said.

He explained that "strike action has forced three hospitals to pay £5.18 now, not in two years time."

IWW Healthworker doesn't think, unlike Unison who are going to push the deal, that £5.18 is anywhere near enough.

The fact that the new rate won't come in straight away

is a disgrace. The NHS employs some of the lowest paid workers in the country.

Raising Questions

While the lowest paid will get just £10,100, pay for NHS managers will go up to £65,000.

IWW Healthworker wants to know why NHS unions have given up so much for so little?

Why was the deal pushed through so quickly in the end? Why did the unions agree to finish negotiations while the fire-fighters are still striking?

The government used Agenda for Change to attack the fire-fighters - and health unions let them!

The Deal

Here's what Agenda for Change will mean:

Hours of work for staff will be 37.5 hours – that's a longer working week for radiographers, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, dieticians and admin staff in London.

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The increase in the working week will slash the pay of radiographers by 7%. Nurses and midwives get no cut in hours.

Pay next year will increase by just 3.225%. Inflation is already 2.5% and taxes will rise by 1% next year, wiping away any increase. The Pay Review Body will be put into mothballs for three years.

New pay scales and grades will be introduced in October 2004. The government says they will be worth 2% 'on average'.

There will be another 3.225% increase in April 2004, followed by a final 3.225% in 2005 – and that's it! Just 12% spread over three years.

There will be performance pay. Unlike now health workers will not be able to move automatically to the top of their pay scales, instead they will be stopped and their performance assessed by their managers.

If their manager doesn't think their performance is up to scratch they won't get a pay increase.

If you thought discretionary points were bad wait for this!

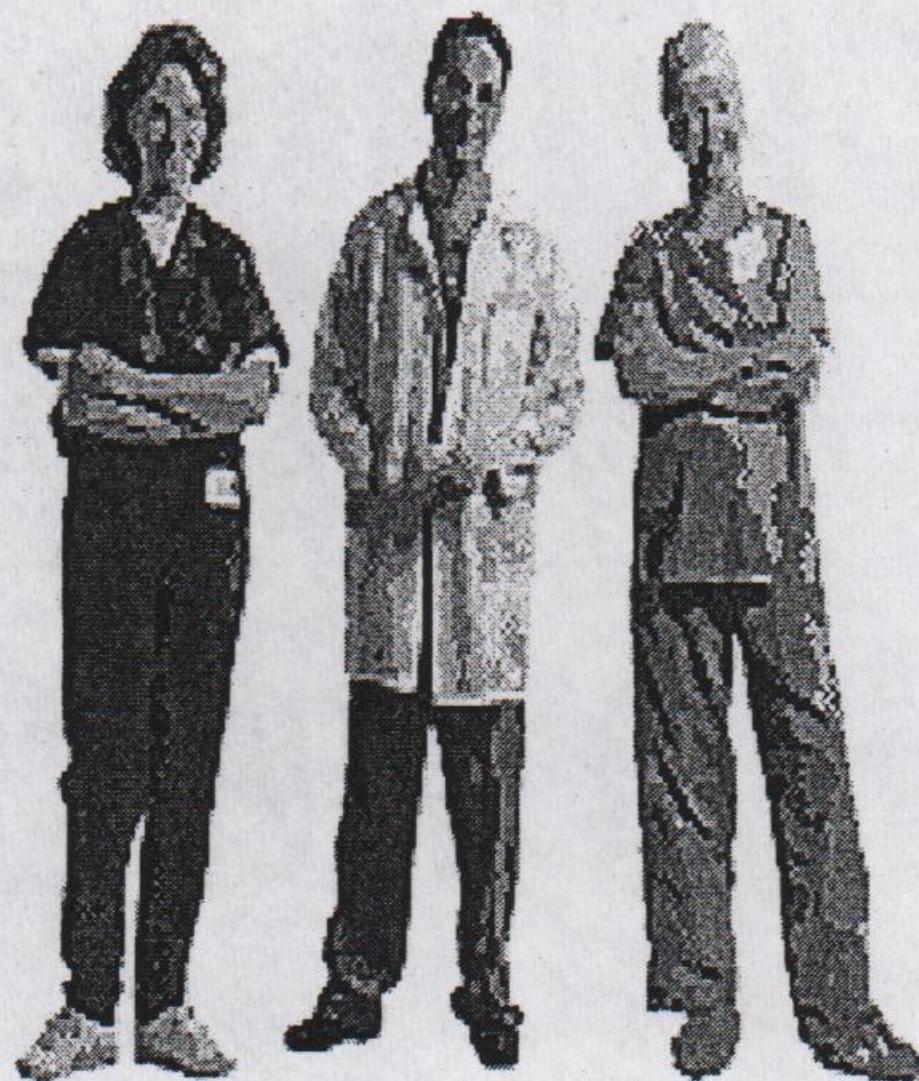
The unions and government claim that Agenda for Change addresses equal pay, yet medical staff and senior managers are not covered by it.

Managers and consultants are overwhelmingly male and will earn substantially more than £65,000 – in fact £65,000 was the **minimum** of the consultant's proposed spine which they rejected!

Holidays will improve, but overtime rates for the weekend will be cut.

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Most allowances will go. Low paid nurses in London will see their London Weighting cut by over £200.



What We Think

The unions have sold their members out and they know it. They have given the government all that they want.

A pathetic 10% three-year pay deal. Performance pay. Modernisation which means more work and longer hours.

Most allowances are going to go saving the government millions.

No wonder health secretary Alan Milburn looked so smug when he announced the deal and no wonder union bosses looked so sheepish. They know the truth.

This is a bad deal for staff and a bad deal for staff is a bad deal for patients.

Agenda for Change has taken the unions three and a half years to negotiate. They have wasted their time.

Health workers have got more taking one-day strikes than Agenda for Change has delivered.

All is not lost though. Unions will be balloting their members in the New Year.

They will try to spin the deal and claim it's a good one. Don't be Fooled.

We will be campaigning for a no vote!

Health workers deserve a decent living. Agenda for Change means most nurses will still earn just £20,000 a year, even though they are being expected to take on more work.

Hard to recruit staff like occupational therapists and radiographers will have to work longer hours. Despite claiming to be family friendly the government want clinics open earlier and later.

Some health workers in Scotland, Leeds and Carlisle have already fought back.

Enough is enough. Unison, Amicus, RCN, RCM and the rest have failed their members.

IWW Healthworker is run by health workers, for health workers.

IWW won't try to sell crap deals to its members.

IWW will point out the truth and the truth is Agenda for Change would be a major set back. Health workers must vote no!

Have Your Say!

This newsletter is written by health workers, for health workers.

If you would like to contribute to future issues or receive copies to distribute please contact us.

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